

Japan Christian Activity News

Property of
Graduate Theological Union

PUBLISHED
BY NCCJ

APR 03 1990

ISSN:0021-4353

#676 MARCH, 1990

DO WE REALLY
DIRECT OUR HEARTS
TO HER

ts: Judges 19:22-30, Mark 14:34

t Friday was quite a significant day
me. I was sitting in the classroom of
Divinity School in the Philippines
e in the afternoon, fighting with my
ek exam. It was, indeed, a very hard
um to tackle. I was sweating. I felt
ed because this was my last class
iod at Seminary; I am returning to
an. Studying at the Divinity School
s been rather complicated. I was
arning a Biblical language (a language
ch I had never even heard before) from
teacher speaking English (also a foreign
guage for me) in a land where still
other language (also foreign to me) is
oken. I was preparing to go home to
pan where another language (my mother
ngue) is spoken. Indeed, it is
aplicated. I have been overwhelmed by
e realization of the complexity of our
rld. It is the end of my time in
vinity School, but it is also the
lebration of a beginning. I will be
ginning to communicate the Good News in
land, molded by all that I have heard,
en, and felt during my experience of
fe in the Philippines.

e of the discoveries from which I will
aw is the technique of finding out what
hidden behind what we usually see,
ear, and feel. There are voiceless
ies, groanings, and sufferings hidden
hind the scenes. There are techniques
or identifying these real situations.
oday I want to look into the suffering of
woman in the time of Judges. Try to
listen to her cry. Then we will look at
hat progress we have made since that time

and see how Jesus challenges us to listen
and to give attention to the cries of our
time.

This story of Judges happened during the
time when there was no king and everybody
did what seemed right in their own eyes.
Considering that such an unbelievably
violent act took place, it sounds right
for the writer of Judges to condemn it.
Unfortunately, the physical violation of
women, which is a total denial of their
rights to exist, continue during the time
of Kind David, of Solomon, of Jesus and
even up to today. This violation
continued despite having a king, an
emperor, or a bishop. Whenever the
physical strength of men was highly valued
and backed up by the legal system, rape
was committed. Individual and mass rape
was committed widely. The rape of one
concubine in this story created the rape
of 600 virgins by the Benjaminites in the
following chapter. Moreover, we see later
on that a daughter of Bethsheba was raped
by a son of David, who had another son
with 700 wives and 300 concubines. There
must be hundreds and thousands of women's
cries buried deep under the ground of
Israel.

The point of the story is at the
conclusion of the chapter. It says,
"Nothing like this has been done or seen
from the day the Israelites came up from
the land of Egypt to this day. Take not
of it, and state what you propose to do."
The Old Testament scholar Phyllis Trible
suggests that, since there are no gender
based words in the Hebrew language, and
the verbal forms and the objects used in
these sentences are all feminine in the
Hebrew text; therefore, we may translate
these sentences as follows, to give
attention to the woman involved in this
story. "And all who saw her said, she was
not, and she was not seen such as this
from the day that the people came from the
land of Egypt until this day. Now Israel

must direct its heart toward her, take counsel and speak." (Ju. 19:29) Now the question comes up, "Did the people really direct their hearts toward the woman, or not?"

There is a story from a Filipina of the present time that we can listen to. "I am Eva, 16 years-old. I am from Cebu. My family was so poor that we did not even have enough food to eat everyday. When the recruiter came and offered me a job in a night club in Japan, I immediately decided to take it. I asked my mother to wait for the money that I would make and send for my brothers and sisters to go to school. Upon arriving in Japan, I was taken to the yakuza gang and sold for 4,000 pesos. Since that night, I was forced to take at least 10 men customers a night. Finally I escaped and found shelter in a home. There, I attempted to commit suicide. I was a virgin when I left the Philippines. Now I have nothing to take home to my mother who I had promised so much. What is the use of going home alive then?

Do we not find her story much the same as the unbelievable violence committed by the men in the story in Judges? Are we really directing our hearts toward this woman who was raped, murdered, cut into pieces and scattered all over the land of Israel? Do we really hear her cry?

Now, let us look into the time of Jesus in our text. Jesus began to be filled with fear and distress. Then he said to Peter, James and John, "My heart is filled with sorrow to the point of death. Remain here and stay awake." But when he returned from his prayer he found them asleep. Jesus asks them three times to watch with him. Yet, they are not able to direct their hearts to him. The cry they hear asks them again and again to be with him during his suffering, yet they neglect him. Jesus finally says, "still sleeping? Still taking your ease? It will have to do. The hour is on us."

The question is this: do we still ignore the cry of Jesus in our suffering sisters and still take our ease? Do we not direct our hearts toward Jesus in them despite the fact that they may be silently asking us again to be awake with them? They say,

"The hour is on us!" There are challenges given to us in international community. We have experienced violent oppression on a larger scale throughout the whole world.

We must trust in our sacred power that will be able to turn suffering into hope even throughout the whole world if we work for it seriously.

Now let us ask each other again: "Do we really direct our hearts toward her?"

Ms. Etsuko Yamada lived in the Philippines for 3 years. She has returned to Japan to serve the UCC-J in a rural congregation which has a concern to help Filipino workers. While in the Philippines Yamada was instrumental in starting "Batis" Center, a re-entry shelter for Filipina's returning from Japan.

CHRIST HAS SET US FREE
DO NOT SUBMIT TO THE
YOKE OF SLAVERY

The Rev. Kim Ahn Hong, appointed General Secretary of the Korean Christian Church in Japan (KCC/J) in October 1988, shared the following reflections at the Thursday noon time service held at the Japan Christian Center in Tokyo.

"Today is March 1, 1990. As I remember the March 1, Independence Movement protests of the Korean people (the first major protest against Japanese colonial rule) in 1919, I ask myself whether there would have been among those who stood against the Japanese military as depicted in the panel pictures at the Pagoda Park in Seoul, Korea.

In reading Galatians 5: verses 1 and 2, we noticed that the word "freedom" is used in the same vein with the word "salvation." What is the meaning of freedom? Within the social system of slavery whoever loses in the fight between justice and evil becomes slaves. There were many other reasons as to why people became slaves. But, it was almost certain that a child born of slaves also becomes

ave, to be sold by the owner with no
ce for freedom.

the Koreans in Japan, were born in
n but born of Korean parents. We are
ferred to as the Koreans in Japan. If
cannot go beyond the boundary of the
ce we should be made as slaves. If we
ait ourselves to be trapped by what we
as the limits of our situation, and
e up any hope of changing that
uation, then we will continue to be
ves, not to be called Christ's
vants.

is very easy to say that we will serve
ers as a liberated person, but it is
ficult to act on this belief. In order
to become slaves we must continue our
uggle for freedom and always ask
selves whether we are at the front line
the struggle of March 1, 1919."

KCC/J TO SPONSOR INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON REUNIFICATION

e following announcement was made by the
C/J: "The Korean Church has proclaimed
95 as a year of Jubilee. The hope is
t significant movement toward
unification of the Korean peninsula will
ve taken place by that date. To this
d, the church in both South and North
rea has worked hard to encourage
changes between the two countries. So
ey may be in solidarity with this
fort, the above symposium is planned and
erseas Christians have prayed to promote
e peace and reunification of the Korean
meland."

he "Tokyo Conference for the Peace and
unification of Korea" will be held from
ily 11-13, 1990. Participants will be
nvited from Korea, the DPRK, Germany,
aiwan, China, Canada and the U.S.A.,
mong others.

SOUTH AFRICAN CHURCH LEADER VISITS JAPAN

he Rev. Frank Chikane, General Secretary
of the South African Council of Churches,
a 15 million member organization actively

involved in the struggle against
apartheid, visited Japan between April 13
and 18 at the invitation of Japan's
Foreign Ministry. The local newspapers
reported that Rev. Chikane's visit, and
recent visits by two black South African
leaders, indicate the Government's
interest in establishing ties with that
country's black majority.

The NCC/J, Anti-Apartheid citizens
movement groups, and the African National
Congress (ANC) were involved in part of
the planning for Chikane's program while
in Japan. In addition to Chikane's
meetings with government officials,
business leaders, opposition party leaders
and legislators, he was able to meet with
church and citizens groups. Public
meetings were held in both Osaka and
Tokyo.

The release of Nelson Mandela and the
legalization of the African National
Congress has brought a wave of excitement
and hope to Apartheid South Africa. As
Jerry Matsila of the ANC's Tokyo office
described it, there is a "feeling that the
black oppressed people are about to assume
power." Decades of struggle have finally
begun to see results bringing
encouragement to the people to intensify
their struggle.

Chikane came to Japan to exchange views
with the people of Japan and to share with
them the problem of apartheid and how it
can be eliminated.

TOWARDS THE COMPLETE ELIMINATION OF APARTHEID

It's a lie that sanctions didn't make a
difference as the British say. The
international community, government's and
particularly the media in the West want
people to believe that there is a new
'broom' in South Africa - F.W. De Klerk,
sweeping in a new way. The world wants to
be supra-historical and deny that its the
people who are behind the change, they
would prefer to believe that its the
government. They want us to forget
history; that people struggled for and
made the change.

The regime in South Africa has lost its
legitimacy; lost the ideological war; and

lost its moral highground (now occupied by the blacks). In the past the regime was seen as legitimate; the international community only worried about human rights and condemned the people for taking up arms, but they never condemned the system. Finally, the people have come to realize that the system must end.

In the past it was easy to justify slavery. You just have to consider people less than human and develop a theory to justify your behavior. But that method collapsed and the cold war ideology was then used as a justification for repression; the threat of communism was used to justify the brutality of the regime. But this is also beginning to collapse and for this we must thank Gorbachev. Now, the exploiters and racists are seen for what they are. When countries now trade with South Africa they are making a clear choice to collaborate with racism - there is no other reason for their relationship with the apartheid regime other than support for the oppression of the masses.

The ANC is sanctioned, Nelson Mandela has been released, and the people are joyous. But the laws that made it possible to ban the ANC are still in tack. The system is still in place - nothing has changed but the release of Mandela. In fact the system is still as brutal as it was before and even worse. The laws can still be used against the people; these laws must be changed before we can negotiate.

The release of Nelson Mandela made negotiations more possible. His release has added more fuel, more determination and a deeper political consciousness. The center of gravity in society has almost moved to Mandela. The people are living as if the government didn't exist; Mandela has command of the people and is a uniting force.

Our people are prepared to negotiate with the regime if the demands for negotiations and conditions created for negotiations are met. The only way to influence and force the apartheid government to meet the conditions necessary for negotiations, to negotiate seriously and thereby dismantle apartheid, is to maintain and intensify sanctions

against the regime. If we remove the pressure they have nothing to worry about and nothing to negotiate about.

I appealed to the government of Japan to follow a two track program which consists of firstly, pressuring South Africa to dismantle the apartheid government intensifying economic sanctions; and secondly to support and encourage those who are working to end apartheid and those who are the victims of the racist system. We welcome the effort of the Japanese government in terms of reaching out to black South Africans by inviting them to visit Japan and supporting their training and skills development programs. In short help us train our people while pressuring with sanctions. But, it's not enough to just prepare the people, we must help them deliver a new society.

Some say the system creates jobs for the blacks, but this is only an investment to ensure that they are kept as perpetual laborers, prohibited from participating in the economy, while strengthening the position of the oppressors.

Japan's voice is needed to take South Africa to the negotiating table and keep them there. Otherwise we might have to go to a war situation in order to keep them there which is undesirable. That would be very costly. We want Japan to say: if you don't change then we won't be able to invest in South Africa or even maintain the companies that are now there. The future prospects in South Africa must outweigh the short term benefits investing in the present system which is about to collapse. I call on the government, the business community and the peoples of Japan to join us and all peace loving people in the world to speed up the end of apartheid. We invite you to join us in a new South Africa, to participate in the economic development of the whole region of Southern Africa once the resources locked by apartheid are released. Amandla! (Power to the people)

Summary of messages delivered by the Rev. Frank Chikane at the Yama Church in Tokyo on March 17, 1990.



KOREAN WORKERS SETTLE DISPUTE WITH JAPANESE COMPANY

reported in the December issue of JCAN, four women workers from Korea employed by the Japanese subsidiary Tanashin Denki (TND) in Kyongi province near Seoul, a cassette deck manufacturer, came to Japan in December in order to hold negotiations with company officials. Confronted with the active wage struggles of the union the company attempted to disguise bankruptcy. On October 18, the decision was made to close shop; 450 workers were dismissed, the majority of which were women.



The TND workers were not alone in their struggle. Delegates from two other labor unions in Korea, Korea Sumida Electric Co. and Asia Swany, were also in Japan during the same period to protest Japanese subsidiarys' factory shutdowns, worker dismissals, violation of labor agreements and refusal to engage in negotiations. These three labor unions were organized during the upheaval of the Korean workers struggle in the summer of 1987.

Encouraged by the Korean Government's policy to attract foreign capital and seeking to take advantage of Korea's cheap labor these companies set up shop in Korea. They reaped enormous profits at the expense of the exploited workers. However, when the workers were successful in organizing democratic labor unions in order to obtain a humane standard of living, the company deprived the workers of their very means of existence by withdrawing their capital and retreating

to Japan.

The 90 day struggle of the TND workers included rallies, demonstrations, protest calls, hunger strikes and appeals to the Japanese Government and Diet members by the union and their supporters.

The TND workers, supported in their struggle by the NCC/J and the Asian Women Worker's Center, held a press conference at the Christian Center building announcing the positive results of their negotiations with the company. The women received 56,000,000 yen on behalf of the union, as compensation.

The company finally entered into negotiations with the workers after rigorous protests brought pressure. They went smoothly at first, but problems arose when an adjustor was sent from Korea to take part in the negotiations. Protesting his involvement the women entered into a hunger strike. This brought the attention of the company officials to the workers.

The workers originally demanded that the company reopen the factory. Said proposal, which the company described as "unrealistic", was not accepted.

However, there was a change in the company's attitude toward the situation which was marked by the company's offering of an apology for closing the factory and admission that its actions were unethical. The workers saw this as a significant change. They were opposing the company not only from an economic point of view but also from a moral or ethical point of view. They refused to be treated as objects and opposed the company's willingness to sacrifice female labor.

At the press conference the women expressed their thanks for all the groups and individuals which supported their struggle, including the union members of Tanashin Denki in Japan, the NCC/J, Asian Women Workers's Center, the media (whose coverage helped bring positive results) and other labor and citizens movement groups. They encouraged those who fight for justice to never be lonesome; through united power the people of Japan and Korea can struggle together to overcome their past.

The purpose of the struggle was not only aimed at negotiations with company officials but it was to engage in the struggle to insure the right to exist for all Korean workers employed by foreign enterprises. It was also a struggle against the exploitation of workers by multinational corporations, and against the governments of Japan and south Korea, whose policies are made to support company owners and not workers. But most importantly, it was a struggle to ensure that this will never happen again.

Although the TND negotiations ended with positive results, Asia Swany and Korea Sumida have yet to reach an agreement.

RELIGION RESPONSIBLE FOR WOMEN'S UNCLEAN IMAGE

The former Secretary of State Ms. Moriyama's request to enter the Sumo wrestling ring during the final ceremony of the grand Sumo tournament was refused. The reason given by the Sumo Wrestling Association was that there is a traditional unwritten rule that women should not enter the ring. This act of discrimination is based on the understanding that women are not clean.

In classical material such as the "Kojiki" (first written 'history' of Japan) there are poems related to woman's menstruation, treating it as a sign of god's blessing, and it is documented that women took on ceremonial roles. From the 8th to the 12th century, when Japan imported China's political system, Confucian ethics were brought into the culture, creating discrimination against women in the family and society.

Buddhism, which prohibited women's entrance into the holy mountains, helped to create more discrimination against women by spreading the belief that women were evil. In this way motherhood (that is, women's sexual ability to bear children) was used in a political sense, resulting in a decrease of their ceremonial role in religion and politics.

Literature of the 12th century indicated that menstruation and childbirth should be a matter of mourning, like death. However, this was not meant to negate the whole humanity of womanhood.

As Buddhism was disseminated among the people along with the belief that "Women cannot be saved", discrimination against women was increased significantly. In the 6th century when Buddhism came to Japan, for the first time, women had to overcome problems of uncleanness, lies, jealousy, anger, and inconsistency, in order to obtain salvation.

In the 15 to 16th century, the "Kechibon" sect of Buddhism came to Japan, teaching that woman's blood from childbirth polluted the rivers and land. Thus, unless a woman believed these teachings, she would go to hell. To ensure her salvation a woman had to participate in "Nenbutsu" - the repetitious prayer recited among the people.

In the 17th century (Edo period) the perception of women as dirty dominated the well established feudalistic social system. Women became man's slave and social restrictions on women were increased based upon the understanding of women as unclean.

The traditional custom requiring a woman to stay in a small cottage, separate from the main house, during her time of the month and during childbirth, is still practiced in the villages. Discrimination against women still continues in Japanese culture.

In order to heal this broken society this misguided thinking must be rejected in favor of greater human interrelatedness.

Junko Sato
(Translated from original article which appeared in "Asahi Shimbun" March 21, 1990.)



My friend pushed my wheelchair
Outside under a cherry tree
And bent the branch down
My face was buried in the blossoms
Overwhelmed by joy I
Began to eat the flowers
Blooming around my mouth

Hoshino Tomihiro

RELEASE OF NELSON MANDELA
CELEBRATED

celebration to honor the release of Nelson Mandela, whose imprisonment spanned over four decades, was held at the Tokyo Peace Church on the evening of March 9, 1990 with eighty people in attendance. The National Christian Council, United Church of Christ in Japan and anti-apartheid citizen's groups cooperated in staging the evening.

The program began with a showing of "Any Child, My Child", a video documenting the victimization of children in apartheid South Africa. Among the many statistics even documenting the abuses it was revealed that just two years, between 1984 and 1986, 3,000 children were detained by the apartheid regime, some as young as 8 years old.

Stewart Ngwenya from the Soweto Civic Association in South Africa, on an official visit to Japan as a guest of the Foreign Ministry, and Jerry Matsila of the Tokyo office of the ANC (African National Congress), were among those on hand to help mark the occasion and to share information on the developments in South Africa following Mandela's release.

Matsila explained that the task now before the people is to turn South Africa into a democratic, non-racist, non-sexist and unified state. Explaining that although Mandela is free apartheid is still in effect, with the situation now resembling that of 1960 when Mandela was still a free man and the ANC had not yet been banned.

Yet, the release of Mandela has aroused the people and its impact cannot be denied. It is now a time to consider the processes, stages and issues to be addressed before moving toward that goal of a democratic society.

According to Matsila the goal is to move the entire structure of the ANC from its headquarters in Lusaka, Zambia into South Africa. And with it the 15,000 ANC members living in exile. They and their

families must be reintegrated into society; housing must be found and education ensured.

December 16, 1990 is the date slated for the first National Congress of the ANC to be held in South Africa. However, before this plan is set in motion talks must be held about the pending negotiations. Toward this end the ANC is prepared to send a delegation to Pretoria. They must first discuss issues such as the agenda and timetable of the negotiations and possibly the format of a new democratic constitution. A constitution guaranteed by a constituent assembly assuring every person one vote. He affirmed that the ANC believes it is in the interests of South Africa to solve these issues non-violently.

Ngwenya and Matsila both urged Japan to intensify pressure through sanctions on the South African government and to continue to mobilize the public in order to ensure that at any given moment the people in South Africa have the support of those in Japan.

A national reception committee to prepare for the visit of Nelson Mandela to Japan has been organized in the Kansai region. Matsila urged Tokyo groups to follow suit. Although the Japanese Government has invited Mandela to Japan and he has agreed in principle to the invitation, Matsila explained that Mandela's purpose in coming to Japan is not to shake hands with Prime Minister Kaifu, but rather to meet with ordinary people working against apartheid.

Human rights lawyer Yoko Hayashi and long time anti-apartheid activist Akira Kusuhara, discussed the issue of apartheid South Africa and Japan. Hayashi explained that here involvement in the anti-apartheid movement in both the U.S. and Britain marked the beginning of her consciousness of all forms of discrimination, including discrimination against women.

Rev. Jintaro Ueda, General Secretary of the Anglican Church of Japan who recently returned from an emergency meeting concerning South Africa called by the World Council of Churches in Harare, Zimbabwe, also spoke briefly to the group.

He said that the day Mandela was released was like the second coming of Christ. Everyone disappeared from the streets and were glued to their television sets. It marked the beginning of a new victory.

A demand was sent to Mr. De Klerk that all political prisoners be released and that the State of Emergency declaration be lifted.

WCC GENERAL SECRETARY VISITS JAPAN

Emilio Castro, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches and his wife Gladys visited Japan from March 1-5, in order to facilitate closer ecumenical relations between the WCC and Japanese Christians through fellowship, dialogue and sharing of issues of ecumenical importance in Japan.

The General Secretary and his wife followed a very busy schedule while in Japan. The schedule in Tokyo included meetings with and visits to church offices, participation in the World Day of Prayer service, a round table discussion with Christian leaders and reception. The Castro's also traveled to Kansai where they followed a similar schedule.

The World Council of Churches perspective on the changing political climate in Eastern Europe; reflections on mission and evangelism; and ecumenical relations in the context of Asia, were among the many issues the Rev. Castro focused upon in his discussions with church and Christian leaders.

He described the communist regimes in Eastern Europe as "societies which had come to the end of their possibilities." Yet he cautioned that although the first obvious temptation is to imitate the west in the hope of providing freedom and abundance, there are voices in the third world urging caution, because for so long the west has been there and they have yet to be invited to the banquet. A society should be envisioned which allows everyone to come to the banquet.

The Rev. Castro clearly asserted that saw no basic contradiction between the results of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the transformation of human life and the gospel as reason or motive for involvement in human rights and social justice. He described students who struggle for peace and justice by confronting the police in the streets as engaging in evangelism. Saying that those who are ecumenical from their perspective are, by the very nature of their involvement, evangelical.

He urged the Japanese Christian community (who number about 1% of the population) not to focus too much attention on increasing their numbers saying "numbers are a risky business." Castro explained that mission cannot be understood apart from its cultural context. A devoted person working in an Islamic context would have the same results as someone with the same level of devotion working in Latin America; "Numbers don't express the peculiar blessing to the church or the preacher."

The Rev. Castro agreed that the impression is correct that other parts of the world have occupied a more primary position in ecumenical relations while Asia is often taken for granted. Apartheid in South Africa, for example, has, due to its very nature, demanded the attention of the world community; and now the events in Eastern Europe are the focal point. But he assured, "We're obliged from every corner to come back to Asia." He also described the Asia region as being involved in a "profound missiology."

KANITA

After 70 years of struggle starting from 1886 the Prostitution Prevention Law was issued. However, the villagers of "Kanita", women's home are those women who are not housed by government institutions established by the laws. One hundred women are living in a community supported by 10,000 people all over the world through yearly donations of 5,000 yen.

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